



## Just the Facts...

### Green Procurement

#### The Federal Government's Purchasing Preference Programs

- 1. What is Green Procurement (GP)?** GP is the purchase of environmentally preferable ("green") products and services in accordance with one or more of the established Federal procurement preference programs.
- 2. Why buy green products?** There are many reasons to buy green!
  - *Environmental Benefits.* Buying green creates markets for recycled materials and agricultural products, conserves resources, saves energy, saves landfill space, and reduces pollution.
  - *Sustainability.* GP provides incentive for manufacturers to develop technologies to create new and improved environmentally preferable products. Using these products lessens or eliminates negative impacts to human health and the environment.
  - *Compliance.* The Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA) directed Federal agencies to develop affirmative procurement (AP) programs to increase the purchase of items containing recycled material. Since then, Executive Order (EO) 13101, the Farm Security and Rural Investment Act of 2002, and the Federal Acquisition Regulations (FAR) also contain requirements to buy green. The Energy Policy Act and EOs 13149, 13221, 12845, and 13123 require Federal agencies to buy energy-efficient equipment and vehicles. EO 13148 also addresses environmentally preferable purchasing with specific requirements for toxic substances, adhesives, ozone-depleting substances, and landscaping products.
- 3. What are the Federal procurement preference programs?** The Office of the Federal Environmental Executive (OFEE) has identified seven green procurement preference programs: recovered material, environmentally preferable, energy efficient, biobased products, alternative fuels and fuel efficiency, priority chemicals, and non-ozone depleting substances. For more information visit the OFEE web site at [www.ofee.gov](http://www.ofee.gov).
- 4. How do the mandatory procurement programs apply?** Federal agencies such as DOD are required to have AP programs for the EPA-designated recovered materials items and USDA-designated biobased items, and should also purchase energy-efficient, fuel-efficient, and non-ozone depleting products. Therefore, we all must meet the purchasing requirements for all of these regulated products. This also applies to contractors spending Federal dollars on these items and applies to contracts that involve the use of these products.
- 5. What are EPA-designated items?** EPA designates items purchased by Federal agencies that should contain recycled material. This list is called the Comprehensive Procurement Guidelines (CPGs). The CPG items fall into eight product categories: construction, landscaping, non-paper office products, paper and paper products, park and recreation, transportation, vehicular, and miscellaneous. The CPGs are published in the Federal register, and can be viewed on the EPA web site at [www.epa.gov/cpg](http://www.epa.gov/cpg).



6. **What are USDA-designated items?** The USDA designates biobased products, which are products purchased by Federal agencies that can be made with renewable agricultural or forestry materials. In March 2006, the USDA designated six products and established minimum biobased content for them. There are 11 proposed categories of biobased products, including items such as ink, plastics, lubricants, and fuel additives. When items are designated, Federal Agencies have 1 year to incorporate biobased purchasing into their AP programs. The proposed and designated biobased items can be viewed on the USDA web site at [www.ars.usda.gov/bbcc](http://www.ars.usda.gov/bbcc).
7. **Are there any exceptions to the purchasing requirements?** The AP guidelines make allowances so that the requirements of the user can be met. There are three instances where EPA- or USDA-designated products need not be purchased over competing products. These exceptions, referred to as “price, performance and availability,” are:
- The price of the recycled or biobased product is unreasonable
  - The recycled or biobased product does not meet reasonable performance standards
  - The recycled or biobased product is not available within the timeframe required by the user, or at a sufficient level of competition (for contracts)
8. **Where can I find green products?** You can find these items in the places you have traditionally ordered from, such as General Services Administration, Defense Logistics Agency, Javits-Wagner-O’Day (JWOD) agencies, and the Government Printing Office. You should also:
- Include green products in your contract specifications and purchase requests
  - Remove all restrictions to purchasing green products in contract specifications and purchase requests
  - Check labeling and product descriptions for environmental attributes
  - Incorporate appropriate FAR clauses into contracts
9. **Who needs GP training and where can they get it?** The best way to ensure that affected personnel follow GP requirements is to provide awareness training. Refresher training is also recommended, since the EPA and USDA periodically add to the lists of designated items. Sources of training are available online and from several environmental and procurement organizations within DoD. The USACHPPM can provide onsite GP training that can be tailored to individual audiences. Attendees should include purchase card holders, procurement and contracting officials, engineers, specification writers, environmental staff, logistics personnel, and product users.
10. **Where can I get more information?** For more information, or to schedule GP training at your facility, contact:

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